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TO AMEMBASSY ROME

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TAGS: EAIR, IT

SUBJECT: CIVAIR - GOI ACCEPTANCE OF TRAVEL GROUP CHARTERS

REF: (A) STATE 8406; (B) ROME 598, (C) ROME 754,

(D) ROME 942

SUMMARY: EMBASSY IS REQUESTED DISCUSS WITH APPROPRIATE
GOI OFFICIALS POSSIBLE GOI ACCEPTANCE ALL CAB AUTHORIZED
PASSENGER CHARTERS INCLUDING TGC'S DURING HOLY YEAR
DRAWING ON GUIDANCE CONTAINED PARAS 5 - 7 BELOW. PARAS
1 - 4 PROVIDE ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND AND ANSWERS TO SPECIFIC
QUESTIONS EMBASSY HAS RAISED. END SUMMARY.

1. TGC CHARTERS ARE NEEDED AS ADDITION TO SPLIT AFFINITY
CHARTERS BECAUSE EACH TYPE SERVICES DIFFERENT SEGMENTS OF
THE VACATIONING PUBLIC. TGC CHARTERS ENABLE NON-AFFILIATED
INDIVIDUALS TO USE CHARTERS UNDER RESTRICTIONS DESIGNED TO
DISTINGUISH THEM FROM INDIVIDUALLY-TICKETED SCHEDULED
PASSENGERS. THE PRINCIPAL REASON FOR APPROACHING THE GOI
AT THIS TIME IS THAT THE LARGE NUMBER OF INQUIRIES FROM
CATHOLIC ORGANIZATIONS ABOUT TGC CHARTERS TO ITALY DURING
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THE HOLY YEAR SUGGESTS A SUBSTANTIAL TRAVEL MARKET THAT IS

NOT LIKELY TO BE DEVELOPED WITHOUT THE AVAILABILITY OF TGC'S (PARA 1, REFTEL A). MANY GROUPS ARE, OF NECESSITY, PUT TOGETHER FROM LARGER UNITS THAN PERMITTED UNDER AFFINITY RULES, E.G. CATHOLIC HOLY YEAR PARTICIPANTS FROM

A SINGLE DIOCESE (NOT CHARTERWORTHY) RATHER THAN A SINGLE PARISH (CHARTERWORTHY). NUMEROUS CATHOLIC DIOCESES ARE INTERESTED IN ORGANIZING TGC CHARTERS TO ITALY SINCE THEY ARE NOT PERMITTED TO ORGANIZE AFFINITY CHARTERS.

2. THE CAB IS STUDYING VARIOUS ALTERNATIVES TO AFFINITY CHARTERS. THERE IS A TENTATIVE CAB PROPOSAL TO PHASE OUT AFFINITY CHARTERS AFTER THE 1975 SEASON (PARA 4, REFTEL B). THE PROPOSAL HAS ELICITED WIDESPREAD OPPOSITION. NO DECISION HAS BEEN MADE AND IT WOULD APPEAR PREMATURE TO USE THIS IN ANY REPRESENTATION TO THE GOI.

3. THE CAB STAFF BELIEVES THE SCANDINAVIANS AND ITALIANS DO NOT ACCEPT TGC CHARTERS SOLELY BECAUSE THEIR RESPECTIVE CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITIES HAVE BEEN MORE INFLUENCED BY THE DESIRES OF THEIR FLAG CARRIERS TO BE PROTECTED AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE FROM ANY COMPETITION THAN BY INTERESTS OF THEIR INDEPENDENT CHARTER OPERATORS, THEIR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES OR FACTUAL INFORMATION. IN THIS RESPECT, THE NOT ENCOURAGING TGC DATA (PARA 4, REFTEL A) WERE GIVEN TO PLACATE CIVIL AVIATION'S AND ALITALIA'S PRESUMABLY OVERSTATED CONCERN WITH THE COMPETITIVE IMPACT OF GOI ACCEPTANCE OF TGC CHARTERS ON SCHEDULED SERVICE.

4. CARRIERS HAVE BEEN ALERTED TO CONTENTS REFTEL D. CAB ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURES ARE DESIGNED TO ENSURE THE INTEGRITY OF ITS REQUIREMENT. THEY ARE APPLIED IN AN EVEN-HANDED MANNER WITHOUT REGARD TO THE NATIONALITY OF A CARRIER. IF GOI CONCERNED WITH CHARTER VIOLATIONS IT SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO ADOPT SAME APPROACH AND SCRUTINIZE THE CHARTER OPERATIONS OF ITALIAN CARRIERS IN THE SAME MANNER IT DETERMINES APPROPRIATE FOR US CARRIERS. ENFORCEMENT ACTION POLICY AGAINST US CARRIERS STEMMING FROM CIVIL AVIATION PIQUE AT BEING OVERRULED ON SPLIT AFFINITY ISSUE COULD BE VIEWED AS DISCRIMINATORY AND MIGHT REQUIRE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE.

5. GOI ACCEPTANCE OF TGC'S WOULD FACILITATE TRAVEL TO ITALY DURING THE HOLY YEAR AND CONTRIBUTE IN SOME MEASURE TO RESTORING BOUYANCY TO US-ITALY TRAVEL MARKET. IDEALLY THE EMBASSY SHOULD SECURE ACCEPTANCE OF THE PRINCIPLE THAT FOR THE HOLY YEAR THE GOI IS PREPARED TO ACCEPT ALL PASSENGER CHARTERS AUTHORIZED BY THE CAB. THIS WOULD

INCLUDE ALL EXISTING TYPES OF CHARTERS, ANY NEW TYPES SUCH AS THE SPECIAL EVENTS CHARTER PRESENTLY UNDER CONSIDERATION BY THE CAB, AND ANY WAIVERS FROM PARTICULAR CHARTER RULES AND REGULATIONS THAT THE CAB MAY GRANT IN CONSIDERATION OF THE UNIQUE ASPECTS OF THE HOLY YEAR,

E.G. THE CANONIZATION OF US BORN MOTHER SETON. IF GOI IS AMENABLE TO THE PRINCIPLE BUT RELUCTANT TO DEFINITELY BIND ITSELF BECAUSE OF ALITALIA PRESSURES OR FOR OTHER REASONS, AN ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE WOULD BE VERBAL ASSURANCES THAT THE PRINCIPLE IS AN APPROPRIATE GENERAL GUIDELINE. THESE VERBAL ASSURANCES COULD THEN BE REINFORCED WITH AN EXCHANGE OF NOTES WHICH WOULD EXPRESS THE DESIRE OF THE AERONAUTICAL AUTHORITIES OF BOTH PARTIES TO FACILITATE CHARTER TRAVEL FROM THE UNITED STATES TO ITALY DURING THE HOLY YEAR AND AFFIRM THEIR BEST EFFORTS TO ACCEPT AS CHARTERWORTHY THE RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE COUNTRY IN WHICH THE CHARTER ORIGINATES.

6. MANY LEADING PERSONAGES IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC HIERARCHY ARE SEEKING SOME RELIEF FROM EXISTING CAB RULES AND REGULATIONS. TRANS WORLD IS PETITIONING THE CAB FOR SOME RELAXATION OF AFFINITY CRITERIA. ALITALIA IS PETITIONING THE CAB FOR A WAIVER OF CERTAIN CHARTER REQUIREMENTS. ALITALIA PETITION POINTS OUT "...THE PERSONS INTERESTED IN THIS KIND OF ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME RELIGIOUS EVENT ARE OF MODEST MEANS WHO, UNLESS CHARTER TRAVEL IS AVAILABLE, WILL BE FORCED TO FOREGO THEIR TRIP." CONSIDERATION OF THESE MATTERS WOULD BE GREATLY FACILITATED IF GOI DEMONSTRATES A SHARED INTEREST BY ACCEPTING TGC CHARTERS AND EXPRESSING ITS PREPAREDNESS TO ACCEPT CHARTERS THAT DEPART IN SOME FASHION FROM EXISTING RULES AND REGULATIONS.

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7. EMBASSY SHOULD REPORT RESULTS OF ITS APPROACHES. IF NOTE EXCHANGE APPEARS FEASIBLE, DEPARTMENT WILL PREPARE DRAFT LANGUAGE BASED ON EMBASSY RECOMMENDATIONS. KISSINGER

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